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Service Announces Bald Eagles Nesting in Sonoran Desert Area of Central Arizona Removed from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is issuing a final rule removing the bald eagle in the Sonoran Desert area of central Arizona from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. Today's action aligns the list with the 2007 delisting decision for bald eagles in the lower 48 states.

On July 9, 2007, the Service removed all bald eagles in the lower 48 states from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife due to recovery. On March 6, 2008, as a result of litigation, the court prevented the Service from delisting bald eagles nesting in the Sonoran Desert area of central Arizona pending the outcome of a status review and 12-month finding. On February 25, 2010, the Service published its 12-month finding determining that the bald eagles nesting in the Sonoran Desert area of central Arizona did not qualify as a distinct population segment and were, therefore, not a listable entity under the Endangered Species Act. On September 30, 2010, as a result of the Service's completed status review and publication of the 12-month finding, the United States District Court for the District of Arizona lifted the injunction.

Bald eagles nesting in the Sonoran Desert area of central Arizona continue to be protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as they do across the nation.

The court order reinstating the provisions of the 2007 delisting rule for the bald eagles nesting in the Sonoran Desert area of central Arizona had legal effect immediately upon its filing on September 30, 2010. This final rule to revise the list is effective upon publication in the *Federal Register* on September 2, 2011, and is available at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/BaldEagle.htm>.

The known Arizona nesting population has doubled over the last 20 years. Continued bald eagle management and monitoring in Arizona occurs as described in the Arizona Game and Fish Department-led Conservation Assessment and Strategy and associated MOU signed in 2007 by numerous land managers and cooperators.

<http://www.swbemc.org/pdf/NGTR173%20BaldEagleConservationAgreement.pdf>

The Endangered Species Act provides a critical safety net for fish, wildlife and plants and to date has

prevented the extinction of hundreds of imperiled species, as well as promoting the recovery of many others. The Service working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species. To learn more about the Endangered Species Program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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